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## INTERVIEW

# WILL THE RUSSIANS RULE THE WORLD?

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*Massive expansion of espionage, military aid to the Third World and covert support for terrorism are part of the Soviet effort to undermine free peoples around the world. In this exclusive interview, DoD's Richard N. Perle tells what the United States must do to combat them.*



*Richard N. Perle, who has written numerous articles on U.S. foreign policy, was appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy in March 1981.*

**American Legion Magazine:** Mr. Perle, what do you consider the most dangerous threat facing the United States today in terms of our international security?

**Richard Perle:** The single most significant threat is the Soviet Union and its growing military capability.

**Q.** Looking at the Soviet Union's rising support for communist movements around the world, what conclusions should be drawn as to that nation's ultimate goals?

**A.** It's important to be clear about the sources of support for movements aligned with or favorable to the Soviet Union, particularly in the Third World. I don't believe that such support arises from the effectiveness of the Soviet model as a magnet for leaders in other countries who are looking for a path to stability and prosperity for their people. It arises, rather, through an effective Soviet campaign to suborn potential leaders and leaders in power through a variety of devices. Military assistance, for example, which in some cases enables them to remain in power. The clearest example of that is Afghanistan where the Afghan government has been installed and is maintained in power by the Soviet Union and would, in my view, collapse at once without the active intervention of Soviet armed forces. Other devices include bribery, intervention in elections and the exploitation of social cleavages of an economic, ethnic and tribal nature.

In short, it isn't that the world is drawn to the Soviet Communist vision of a better future; but rather that people who are prepared to achieve power with help from somewhere, find a willing source of assistance in the Soviet Union whose interest is not, in my view, in the long-term betterment of the people of those countries but, rather, in expanding Soviet influence.